

Ser. No. 10/643,254
Docket No.: CL1610 US NA

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Status of the Application

In the January 25, 2007, Final Office Action (*hereinafter* "Office Action"), claims 1-10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20-22, 24, 26, 28-35, 39, 40, and 42 were rejected. In the present response, claim 31 was amended to correct grammatical and antecedent basis errors. No new matter was added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20-22, 26, 28-30, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Guill (U.S. Patent No. 3,029,466). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Guill cannot anticipate claim 1 or its dependent claims because claim 1 requires (1) a first inlet port (or a plurality of inlet ports) in the wall of the housing for introducing a hydrogel-forming suspension into the housing cavity and (2) a *second inlet port* (or a plurality of inlet ports) in the housing for introducing a biocatalyst into the housing cavity. In the Office Action, it is asserted that the inlet pipe (53) is equivalent to the second inlet port of claim 1 (see page 4, 1st paragraph, of the Office Action). Comparing Applicants' claimed invention with Guill's figures and disclosure contradicts this assertion. In Guill's Figure 1, inlet pipe (53) introduces cold liquid into the tank (T), which at best is equivalent to the quenching station (23) of Applicants' invention (see Applicants' Figure 3), which is *outside* of the housing and is not even a requirement of the claim 1 invention. The section of Guill's device that is similar to Applicants' housing is illustrated in Guill's Figure 1, where a *single* inlet conduit (15) introduces resin into the resin chamber (13). Note that (25) of Guill, better illustrated in Figure 2 therein, is *not* a second inlet port for introducing a biocatalyst (see col. 3, lines 27-40); it is used to inject heating fluid (steam) into the system because heating is necessary for proper function of the Guill device (see col. 3, lines 41-44). Based on the necessity for this heating fluid in Guill's device, no other use for (25) is suggested.

Referring to Figure 2 in Applicants' specification, the use of two inlet ports (4) within the housing is illustrated. Guill fails to disclose *within the housing* this second inlet port *for introducing material into the housing cavity*. Because Guill does not disclose the required second inlet port, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1

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and its dependent claims are novel over Guill. Removal of the section 102 rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-9, 28-29, 31, 33-35, and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Guill in view of Nash (U.S. Patent No. 2,254,237). Claims 40 and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Guill and/or Nash in further view of either Ribble *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,429,788) or Kahlert *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 4,639,423). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments presented above are equally applicable to the obviousness rejections. In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, one of the requirements is that the references must teach or suggest every element of Applicants' claimed invention. MPEP § 2143.03. As stated above, Guill fails to teach element (c) of claim 1, and none of the other references either alone or in combination teaches or suggests this element of Applicants' claimed invention. Applicants thus respectfully submit that the claims are nonobvious over Guill in any combination with the other cited references.

Summary

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. In order to expedite disposition of this case, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number below to resolve any remaining issues. Should there be a fee due which is not accounted for, please charge such fee to Deposit Account No. 04-1928 (E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company).

Respectfully submitted,

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